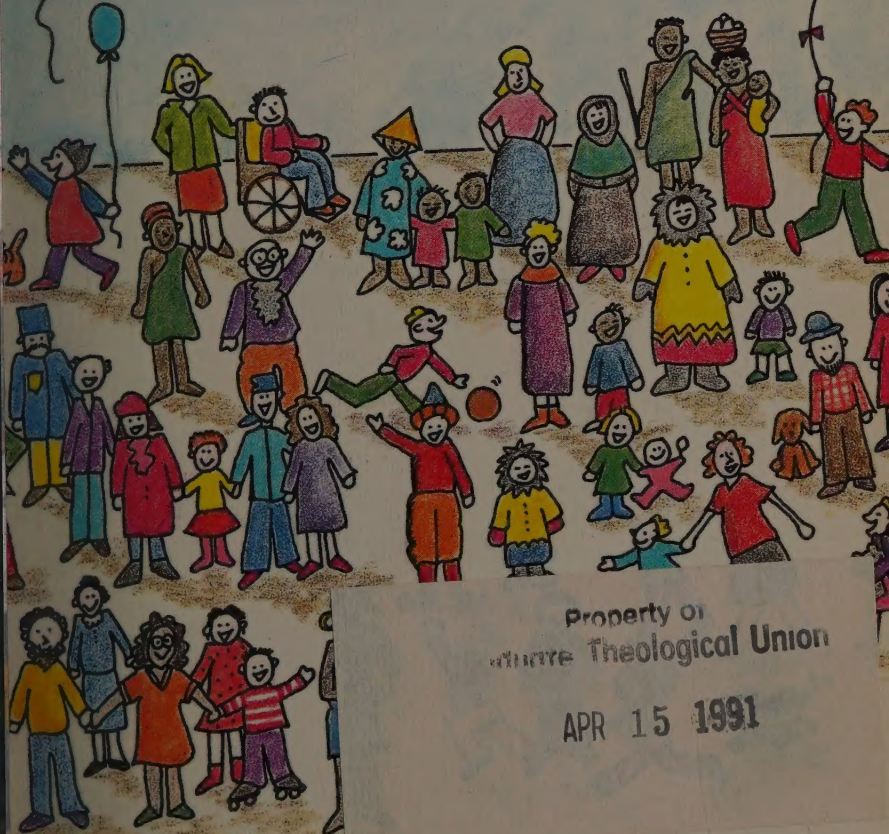


LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

MAY
1991

All God's Children



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For Growth in Faith and Mission

Cover meditation ♦♦

Joy, freedom, hope, peace—as God's children we cherish these words and the ideals they represent.

Gifted, unique, loved, blessed—these words describe each of us as God's children.

Joy, love, peace, blessing—words at the heart of our experience as children of God, yet words that are often forgotten as we find ourselves caught up in the daily needs, concerns, schedules of our lives. The words may seem empty compared to the problems of the day: the worried look on a troubled child's face, the loneliness of a grandmother bedridden in a nursing home, the pain of a grieving friend, the unrelenting news of a war far away, yet close to home.

But the words come to life again when we listen to the younger of God's children.

We feel acceptance as we remember a child's hug and smile.

We sense peace as we watch a baby sleep.

We experience joy as we see children laugh during a hailstorm when the stones pop like corn.

God's younger children often help God's older children grasp big concepts as they tell us things in the childlike way: "God is even bigger than the Sears Tower!" "Don't worry—let's talk to God about it."

And God's younger children remind us all to accept and cherish God's gifts.

A Sunday school student beams with pride as she recites a newly memorized Bible verse.

The cherub choir unabashedly sings "This Little Light of Mine."

A grandchild stops a household activity, insisting that everyone admire the rainbow.

As we adult children of God listen to God's younger children, we learn anew of the joy, excitement and wonder that each new day offers. There are no boundaries that do not be crossed, nor dreams that do not be hoped, when we as God's loved children of all ages extend our hands and hearts to one another in love, joy, and compassion—as a community of God that God intends and empowers, us to be.

*Sister Noreen Steuber
Chicago, Illinois*

ON THE COVER:

"All God's Children," ink and pencil illustration by Marnie Baehr.

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Tunie Munson-Benson

How to help children focus on the *good*
more than the *goods*. **c a g**

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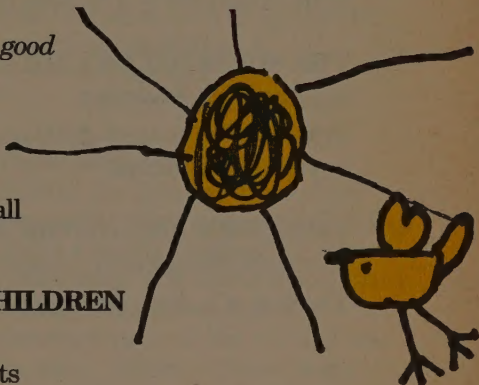
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

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For the benefit of Women of the ELCA participants, articles relating Women of the ELCA mission areas are marked with these symbols:  action,  = community and  = growth. This issue considers *primary family relationships*, a Women of the ELCA program aim which reads "Strengthen primary and family relationships."

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Guest Planner

Barbara Wilson

ecumenism controversial

at a blow you deal your readers
in *Everyday View of*
"ecumenism" (February LWT). I
at the implication that I do not
y how to pronounce *ecumenism*
that it is a tough word. When
eran women can be so insulted
r own journal, our sense of
g connected with church
ion suffers, to say nothing of
becomes of the case for
ecumenism.

*Gloria Austerberry
Omaha, Nebraska*

*t blame the writer for this one.
editors added the pronuncia-
key, since what is crystal clear
e may be unknown to
her.—ED.*

r Jack Lundin in "An
yday View of Ecumenism"
"Ecumenism. That's right—
t out loud. Eh-CUE-men-ism.
now it rolls off the tongue!"
e Webster's Unabridged
onary gives this pronunciation:
u-men-ism." The Winston
onary, College Edition, has a
lar pronunciation. Which is
ect?

*Otto A. Zwanziger
Harlan, Iowa*

*matter of fact, three different
unciations are listed in
ster's Ninth New Collegiate
ionary, LWT's standard refer-
We printed the most common
the pronunciation Mr.
nziger cites is also acceptable.—*

Lundin stated that the ELCA
participated in ecumenical

adventures with Hindus. Why
should Christians seek wholeness
and harmony with those who
worship many gods? Bringing
paganism into Christ's church in
the name of ecumenism is heret-
ical. Our mission is to spread the
gospel, not to corrupt it.

*Dottie Ness
Sharon, North Dakota*

Bible study spurs action

During the January Bible study
our circle questioned how we can
make a caring difference in our
community. The recent house fire of
a disabled member and her
daughter came to the mind of one
member. Others were not even
aware of the loss.

In the next two weeks a commu-
nity benefit soup supper was
planned which netted a substantial
balance. It was matched by the
local Lutheran Brotherhood
branch. What a blessing that Bible
study was to both the recipients
and the circle members.

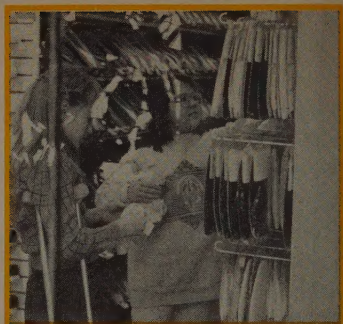
*Delores Hengelfelt
Stromsburg, Nebraska*

Youth Subscriptions

As a way of incorporating young
women into Women of the
ELCA, LWT is encouraging con-
gregational units to give gift sub-
scriptions of LWT to new confir-
mands and high school
graduates. Special gift cards are
available for the subscriptions,
which are to be linked to a par-
ish's group subscription. Call 1-
800-328-4648, ext. 556 for fur-
ther information.

Children: Beyond Consumerism

Tunie Munson-Benson



I am fingering the strap of a discount store backpack, eyeing the price tag, waiting for a vote from advisors gathered round.

"Pick this one," says a boy about my son's "you won't feel bad if this one gets stolen . . . it's the cheapest pack here."

A boy in expensive hightops next to him lays out his. He twirls a Bart Simpson key chain that's identical to the one my son possessed last week, before his backpack and its contents disappeared from his fourth-grade classroom. (Everybody who's anybody owns a piece of Bart these days—or rather, everybody owns a piece of them.)

"This backpack's so rank," the same boy jokes, "that nobody would bother to lift it."

One of the kids gathered around doesn't enter into the conversation. I remember that three years ago, her sister, then 10 years old, had been caught shoplifting. A quiet student from a middle-class family with religious parents, the girl had confessed to an aching emptiness, and believed she was unloved.

In the toy department, I retrieve my own 7-year-old, who lobbies me for a trinket featuring a cartoon character. "Buy it!" the gang around us claims as one body. The cry for more is universal regardless of how much stuff any one of the kids ready lays claim to.

It's been estimated that over \$100 billion a year is spent on advertising, and that by age 20 the average young person will have seen 350,000



**"Everybody
who's anybody
owns a piece
of Bart these
days."**

commercials! Is it any wonder we are rearing a nation of shoppers, kids (and parents) who focus on the *goods* rather than the *good* in their lives?

How to resist? A subscription to a children's magazine like *Zillions* (*Consumer Reports* for kids) or *Skipping Stones* (a multicultural children's quarterly) can clarify values and expand children's choices. (See the list of resources on page 6.) A handbook like *Discover the World: Empowering Children* offers ideas for adults to help promote peace and feelings of inner worth in the young. Flicking off TV need not mean deprivation, *if*, as Jim Trelease in *The New Read-Aloud Handbook* cautions, parents are willing to fill the void with creative and caring activities.

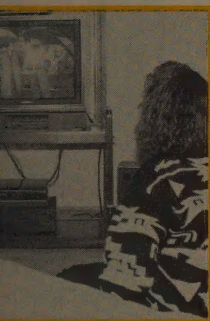
I wonder, as I join the crowd at the checkout counters, if anyone believes the research that shows how, for people with incomes above the poverty line, there is little relationship between income and happiness, between spending and well-being. Do *I* believe it?

My impulse is to corral every distracted shopper into an impromptu support group. After all, books—from the recently updated classic *Parenting for Peace and Justice* to Paul Wachtel's *The Poverty of Affluence*—speak of the power of community. Indeed, Wachtel asserts that without a coming together of concerned friends, committed to making changes and meeting regularly to find mutual support, it is almost impossible to resist the temptations of "the consumer life."

Jesus had something other than Nintendo games and Esprit sweatshirts in mind when he promised he had come so that we might live more abundantly (John 10:10). Yet feeling, or fearing, a sense of impoverishment, we remain a culture of have-nots: people with *not* enough time, *not* enough energy, *not* enough imagination to seek abundance elsewhere.

If that sense of an abundant life is to dawn, the first step may simply be to give thanks, daily, for the intangibles. We might begin a revolution of consciousness—in us and in our children—by saying aloud a thank-you every time we share a confidence or story, every time we coexist with them in silence or in nature, every time we open our hearts to each other.

"Patience," I ask of the children—my own and others—who, in truth, want more than the poor



age 20, the
rage young
son will
e seen
,000 TV
nnercials!



material substitutes we often give them for time, our mindful attention, our committed ample. They are, after all, waiting for the gro- ups to wake up to what is truly wonderful, and t- to share this abundance with them. Only then- we, and they, come home to the light and love t- Christ's promise holds for us. ■

Tunie Munson-Benson is a free-lance writer and creator of "The Book Nook Program: A Celebration of Children's Literature," implemented in schools by teachers and parents/volunteers. She and family live in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Resources

Magazines

Zillions (formerly *Penny Power*), a bimonthly. Ordering address: P.O. Box 54861, Boulder, CO 80322-4861. \$13.95 for six issues.

Skippping Stones, a quarterly. Ordering address: 80574 Hazelton Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97424. \$15 for four issues.

Books

Discover the World: Empowering Children to Value Themselves, Others and the Earth, edited by Susan Hopkins and Jeffry Winters (New Society Publishers, 1990). Available from Augsburg Fortress, code 40-192-7975; \$14.95.

Parenting for Peace and Justice: Ten Years Later by James B. McGinnis and Kathleen McGinnis (Orbis, 1990). Augsburg

Fortress code 40-649-1257; \$9.95. (The original was published in 1981 and also is still in print.)

The Poverty of Affluence: A Psychological Portrait of the American Way of Life by Paul L. Wachter (New Society Publishers, 1988). Augsburg Fortress code 40-151-7975; \$12.95.

The New Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease (Viking Penguin, 1989). Augsburg Fortress code 40-46881-1476; \$9.95. (This is an updated version of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*.)

Find the books and magazines above at your community or church library, or nearby bookstore. The books listed are available through Augsburg Fortress locations.



Vineyard with a Vision

Mary W. Anderson

Matthew's gospel there are three striking parables that talk about vineyards. The first (Matthew 20:1-16) recounts the story of laborers in a vineyard who were hired at different times of the day, but who all received the same wages. Here we learn about God's system of justice in the vineyard: "The last will be first, and the first last."

We learn more about life in God's vineyard in the story of the two sons who were each asked to work in the vineyard (Matthew 21:28-32). One said yes, but didn't go, the other said no, but later changed his mind and went. At the vineyard's end, Jesus said to the chief

priests, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you" (verse 31b, New Revised Standard Version).

Last, in Matthew 21:33-44, there is the story of the tenants in the vineyard, who, because of their irresponsibility and violence, are cast out of the vineyard. Others are put in their

place who will faithfully carry out the work that needs to be done.

It can be instructive to compare the image of the vineyard to God's first planting in the Garden of Eden. In a sense, Matthew's image of the vineyard is a way of replanting that image of the first garden.



Compare the image of the vineyard to God's first planting in the Garden of Eden.

The Garden of Eden wasn't simply a place of creation; it was a place of right relationships, a way of life. All the parts of our world came together then, all with their own functions and purposes—different plants, animals, the elements of earth, fire, air, and water. And God looked at all these different things living and working together, and God said, "This is very good."

One of the deadly by-products of our expulsion from the garden was that the harmonious community of men and women, animals and earth was horribly broken—in truth and in our eyes. Instead of grasping the beauty of a world filled with different elements coexisting to help and complement each other, with our impaired vision we could now see only as far as our noses.

Relegated to the other side of Paradise, we were punished with the curse of self-focusedness. When we looked out at the world, we were brainwashed by our sin to believe that anything or anybody different from ourselves was automatically inferior, suspicious, and somehow against us. We became afraid.

Then came Jesus—preaching and teaching not of a garden, but of a dominion which, in several parables, he likened to a vineyard. And God's vineyard is a vineyard with a vision, one that has its own system of justice—the first will be last and the last



**In the ELCA we have
a unique opportunity
... to model new
ways, to be
visionaries.**

first. It is a vineyard focused not on individuals, but on community. In the vineyard with a vision, the created diversity of the Garden of Eden is restored. In the vineyard different gifts, talents, and perspectives are a blessing, not a curse. In it we change competition for cooperation.

In this vineyard with a vision doesn't matter whether we are male or female, Asian or Native American, whether our ancestors came to America on the deck of the Mayflower or the belly of a slave ship. It doesn't matter if we are physically or mentally challenged, married or single, ordained or lay, straight or gay, because the first will be last and the last first anyway. God said so.

Jesus said the dominion of God is like this vineyard with a vision planted in the world. This vineyard with a vision in which we labor is growing and producing fruit. And it needs faithful care and attention so that faithfulness, love and peace can thrive in all the world.

This faithful care is God's mission and our ministry. But the task is not easy for those who are laborers turned ministers, not only because the work itself can be difficult (as someone said, "Once you catch the vision, that's when the trouble starts"), but because as God's ministers we must live in, but not of, the world. It is true that we are forgiven of our sins, but we are unable to

lly free of our

his vineyard
a vision is our
on too. In the
angelical Lu-
ran Church in
erica we had,
I still have, a
que opportuni-
We were given
chance to re-
nt our vine-
d—to form a
y denomination,
odel new ways,

be visionaries. While we've been
uccessful in some areas, we've dis-
ered that the replanting is not an
y task. It's hard to create a com-
n vision when we have our eyes
ourselves. And it's painfully diffi-
to create and function in a new
em of justice where the first will
ast and the last first. Yet we have
n through Jesus what that vision
be.

a refrain often heard in various
ts of the ELCA is, "I thought the
rch would be different." Many
e this sentiment in surprise as
y discover that the ills of society
as alive and well inside the
rch as outside in "the world."

o many of us come as laborers to
vineyard full of the hope of the
pel only to discover that racism,
ism, co-dependency, sexual ha-
sment, verbal abuse, power
nes and just plain old impolite-
s are part of the vineyard too.

acknowledging this reality is not
ant to shame us, or to point fin-
s at certain groups. This reality is
ply a part of the sinful weeds that
w in the vineyard—and though



**Many of us come
full of the hope of the
gospel only to discover that
racism, sexism, and
co-dependency . . . are part
of the vineyard too.**

we may not be in-
dividually respon-
sible for sowing
these bad seeds, we
do have a responsi-
bility to point them
out and weed them
out.

Sometimes in
our frustration we
end up attacking
each other, instead
of the weeds. Let us
be clear what and
where the enemy is.

The enemy is not
our neighbor—for Christ is our
peace, reconciling us to God, and
bringing the hostility to an end. No
single individual, culture or race is
our enemy. So, let us aim our weed
whackers carefully. We must be care-
ful to root out the problem, and not
uproot our neighbor's integrity.

Let us remember that the vision
of the church, the vineyard, is a com-
munity vision. Let us become as one
and put together our hands, our
heads, our hearts, and most of all,
our eyes—for the glory of God.

And let us all put our voices to-
gether and say AMEN. ■

*Mary Anderson served as pastor at
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pros-
perity, South Carolina. She now lives
in Oak Park, Illinois, and serves in
the Division for Outreach of the
ELCA. She presented a version of
"Vineyard with a Vision" at a multi-
cultural education training event for
ELCA churchwide and regional em-
ployees.*

New Hope for Special Children

John Stevens Kerr



Kevin takes time out for nourishment. Kevin is fed through a tube in his stomach. His classroom teachers at Ken-Crest West Philadelphia Center are fully equipped to handle his medical needs during the preschool day.

The infant lies in the hospital crib surrounded by tubes and machines that feed him life. His mother, her dress enveloped in a sterile hospital gown, strokes his head and softly sings lullabies.

This story may come to a happy ending when the baby turns home healthy and well and active. Other stories, though, don't end that quickly and neatly.

Some children spend months of their vital early years in hospitals. They come home dependent upon technology—ventilators, oxygen, feeding tubes—continual nursing care to sustain life. The nursery becomes a hospital room. Worried parents take on the excruciating task of 24-hour-a-day nursing care. These children cannot always play and learn the way healthy children do.

Dr. Mary Ellen Caffrey, director of Philadelphia Children's Services for Ken-Crest, an agency affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has developed a comprehensive program—the first of its kind in the United States—to help the medically fragile, technology-dependent children.

"Ken-Crest has long worked with children with developmental disabilities," Caffrey says, "and medically fragile children are especially vulnerable to developmental problems. Sometimes these arise from medical complications. But the extend

hospital stays and restrictions at home also delay their development."

Dr. Caffrey's vision became a reality in October 1988. One of the first to enroll was Aikia Henderson, who could not breathe on her own. She breathed through a tube in her trachea, with air pumped from a ventilator, a machine about the size of a vacuum cleaner. Without that machine, Aikia's life would be measured in minutes.

Aikia came to a special classroom, one of Ken-Crest's Centers, where developmentally disabled and nondevelopmentally disabled preschoolers learn and play in an integrated setting. Her classroom differed only in the medical equipment and the presence of registered nurses, who were part of a team that included preschool teachers and therapists.

Aikia's medical problems limited her socializing and playing. Though four years old, she was very shy, spoke very little, and did not relate well with other children.

Today, Aikia goes to kindergarten in a public school, attended constantly by a nurse provided by Pennsylvania's ventilator program. Her mother comments, "I can't praise Ken-Crest's program enough." "We work very closely with parents," Dr. Caffrey explains. "They carry the major responsibility for their child. We help and support them in understanding their child's development and in achieving their objectives for their child."

"These kids can't be left alone," says Kay Furry-Johnson, nursing coordinator at the West Philadelphia center. "We provide a respite for the parents." Such assistance is a long way to help families.

The strain of a medically fragile child can also tear apart the fabric of a marriage. Ken-Crest's intense family support, sharing responsibility with the parents so they no longer feel alone and helpless, dramatically improves family stability and the quality of life at home.

The happy appearance of Ken-Crest's classrooms, decorated with bright colors, posters and flowers, belies the



Aikia, foreground, needs a ventilator to enable her to breathe. Still, she enjoys play and stories with preschoolers who do not have medical needs. The teacher, Theresa Woodruff, is specially trained to work with medically fragile children.



Aikia, middle, enjoys a birthday party with nonmedically fragile children as part of her integrated learning setting.

sophistication of what goes on in the rooms. On closer examination, you notice that a gaily decorated pole is also stand for feeding bags. Some play equipment looks different; it is for those with specific physical needs. The doctors at the center may have feeding tubes

and tracheostomy tubes, to help children who use such equipment gain a better self-image. The staff engages the children constantly with conversation and activities.

"Each child has an individual program," Jo Schwartz, teacher-coordinator, says. "We work on speech, all the oral types of problems, feeding, perceptual and motor problems, and we put it all together in a normal social environment."

In fact, "normal" is the key word for this program. Blending medical and therapeutic activities into a regular preschool day makes them seem less intrusive, more a part of life. The children develop positive self-images and gain confidence. They spend a good bit of time with other children who do not have medical needs, doing the things that preschoolers enjoy.

Children from 16 months to school age can attend the center's programs. Infants and those who live far away are served through home-based programs. Over 50 children are enrolled.

Children attend from two to five days a week, depending upon their need. They arrive in buses that are specially equipped with an array of medical equipment and supplies to cover any emergency. A registered nurse rides on the bus as it picks up children and takes them home.

Margaret and Michael Love know the difference this program can make. Their son, Kevin, now three years old, was born with an underdeveloped esophagus that caused a feeding disorder. He spent his first six weeks in the hospital. He came home wearing a saliva bag and a feeding tube in his stomach.

When he was four months old, Kevin suddenly stopped eating. His frantic parents called 911 and rushed him to the hospital. The doctors said he might not survive the night. "It hit us like a ton of bricks," says Michael Love. "They told us he was brain-damaged."

Kevin has been in the Ken-Crest program for 20 months, starting at home and later attending a center five days a week. Now he can stand, is beginning to take steps, lifts his arms, goes to strangers, and imitates others—all the vital early milestones of life. His esophagus problem has been improved, and he is learning to eat.

"I'm thrilled with his progress," says Margaret Love. "He's a lot more social and friendly. He sits up and reaches for things by himself. He and his younger brother Anthony have become real pals."

His dad, Michael, agrees. "We always knew Kevin would be able to do these things. It was just a matter of when. Every time I see the doctor who said he was brain-damaged, I tell him about Kevin's latest accomplishment."

Kevin may not be hand-in-hand with others his own age," Michael concludes, "but one day he'll be running out behind them." ■



Kevin, held by his mother, Margaret, enjoys a moment at home with his brother Anthony and dad, Michael.

Don Stevens Kerr is a Lutheran pastor working for Gen-Comm Communications, Inc., which does work for Ken-Crest. He and his wife live in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. The Ken-Crest program for medically fragile children is featured in "Hello, Daniel," a segment from the September 1990 MOSAIC, the ELCA video magazine. Back issues of MOSAIC can be ordered through Augsburg Fortress locations for \$10 plus shipping.



The JOYS of MENTORING

Ken Smith

Sitting in a coffee shop across the table from 14-year-old Jennifer, Marcia considered the slightly burned crust on the girl's lemon meringue pie. She wondered what to say next. Marcia's pastor had said that Jennifer had selected Marcia to be her mentor as part of Jennifer's last year of confirmation.

Marcia was not sure what a "mentor" was, but it was hard to say no when asked. Marcia had not spoken with a teenager for several years, and she could never remember talking with a teenager about faith. How was this going to go?

As Jennifer played with the meringue, Marcia nervously dipped her tea bag in and out of the hot water. The silence was awkward. Marcia asked Jennifer about school and how things were going. Jennifer's answers were clipped and did not invite conversation.

Marcia asked why Jennifer had chosen her. Jennifer responded that she had seen Marcia singing in the choir almost every Sunday; the pastor had said they should select a

mentor who was active in the congregation, and Marcia's singing meant that she was active. Marcia also seemed like someone who would say yes.

Then Jennifer reached into her backpack beside her on the seat. She took out a crumpled piece of paper that she said she got from confirmation class. It listed a number of things young people should ask their mentors when they met, and she wondered if she could ask Marcia some of the questions.

Marcia was at first relieved, then delighted as the questions unfolded. She shared the story of her own confirmation long ago and talked of how confirmation classes had changed since then. Jennifer asked another question from the sheet, and Marcia explained how she became a member of the congregation when she moved to the community in 1968 with her husband, who had since died.

Jennifer produced a paperback version of *Luther's Small Catechism* and, following the instructions on the

Marcia was not sure what a "mentor" was, but it was hard to say no when asked.

Phrases from the catechism triggered memories for Marcia, and she started to tell parts of her faith journey.

et, gave the catechism to Marcia. Marcia went through the pages quickly and read a part of the Apostles' Creed and the petition on forgiveness from the Lord's Prayer, Jennifer asked which parts of the catechism meant the most to her. Phrases from the catechism triggered memories for Marcia, and she started to tell parts of her faith journey. Jennifer began to listen carefully, asking questions about what Marcia had experienced. The crumpled paper and the pie were forgotten. The two talked.

Marcia asked again about school, and this time she learned about the classes Jennifer was taking and how much order school seemed this year. It seemed to Marcia that Jennifer was very busy for someone who was just 17. It seemed to Jennifer that Marcia was really busy for someone who was almost 70. Marcia revealed how she sometimes used all her activities to keep her mind occupied. Sometimes when she had nothing to do, she felt lonely. Jennifer said she knew a little about what that felt like. They talked about loneliness.

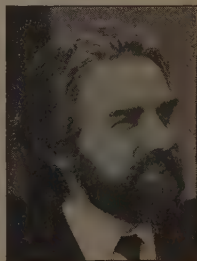
Several months later, Marcia sat in the church library with a dozen other adults who had been mentors in the congregation's confirmation program. Each talked about the experience. Each mentor's experience seemed different. One talked with her grandchild about faith and family tradition. Another saw her role as

helping the young person know the catechism. Others, more like Marcia and Jennifer, shared life stories. One man had been selected as a mentor because he was a pharmacist, and the young man he was paired with wanted to be a pharmacist when he grew up. Another woman spent time with the young person together delivering meals on wheels.

A few were disappointed in the relationship. But most felt it was a worthwhile experience and would do it again. For Marcia, being a mentor had deepened her own involvement in the congregation. Jennifer and Marcia became good enough friends to exchange Christmas gifts.

For information about how to set up a mentoring program in your congregation, see the next page.

The Rev. Ken Smith is a program specialist for youth education and catechetics in the Division for Congregational Life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Smith coordinated confirmation mentoring programs at two former parishes in Wisconsin: First Lutheran in Beaver Dam and Midvale Lutheran in Madison.



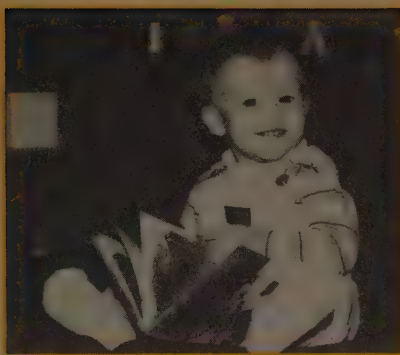
MENTORING

*M*entoring is linking a young person with an adult member of the congregation to share together what it means to be a member of that community. Young people need models in order to develop their own faith. In turn, mentors can demonstrate that the congregation cares about youth. Sometimes mentors work with young people in the catechism. Mentors and young people may share life stories. In sharing, the young person hears what it means to be an adult Christian. And mentors hear what it's like to be a young person growing up today. Congregations can use a program like this to help bridge the gap that can often develop between youth and adults, and to build both adult and youth involvement in the parish's education programs.

The more the young person can participate in the selection of the mentor, the better. However, some may not know whom to select. In that case the pastor or confirmation program leader may want to make suggestions. In some cases, all links are made by the coordinator responsible for the program. The coordinator contacts each person selected and describes the mentor program, indicating that they have been chosen to meet with a young person in the congregation to share what it means to be an adult member of the congregation. The invitation to be a mentor should be as specific as possible—noting the length of the relationship and how many times the two are expected to meet.

A meeting for mentors before they begin might address the goals and description of the mentoring program, describe what adolescents are like and offer models for structuring the meetings. At this informational meeting it is also important to discuss expectations about feedback and reporting, issues of confidentiality and young people, and the relationship between mentoring and the promises made in the baptism of children by the family and members of the congregation. ■

—KS



Books Build Relationships

Barbara Wilson

Once upon a time there was a grandmother who read and remembered and had a voice soft and muggy. Love flowed from her in stories that shaped old memories and stirred young imaginations.

Once upon a time there was a godmother who searched for story treasures in bookshops, at garage sales, and in attics. She carried a list of birthdays in her purse and had a Christmas box for the presents she found much too early.

Once upon a time there was a mom who made sure the bookshelf was at least as full as the toy shelf. Her tuck-in story came just before prayers and the good-night kiss.

These women have two things in common. First, they value a story. They recognize that lively, life-affirming words, strung together and spoken with love, communicate more than sounds and meanings. A story can entertain, explain, reclaim,

change, even save its hearer. A well-told story can have its own life—and if you are a storyteller or a story reader, you know.

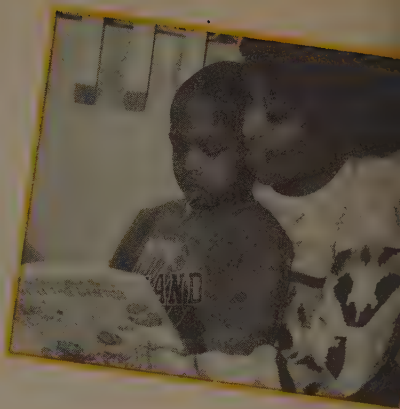
Lively, life-affirming words, strung together and spoken with love, communicate more than sounds and meanings.

Second, these women maintain and nurture relationships. They know that the niece busy growing inches, the godchild with the shy, searching questions, and the toddler who never seems to sit still will be

shaped by who and what are around them. Knowing that all of them—and all of us—crave stories, these relationship-nurturers give stories, in person or in books.

Jesus knew about stories and the power they have. Imagine the listeners as he told the story of the woman and her lost coin. There must have been poor women in the crowd, women who kept brooms handy and treasured small things, who could identify with both the coin and the woman Jesus described. To these women Jesus' story was a gift that said, "You know the strength and commitment of your love. God's love is even greater, and it is for you."

Where might you, a faith-sharer, find a story that tells a young child something about God's love? You need a story built from words, characters, and things familiar to a child



imaginary adventures and is waiting at home with a carrot for him when he returns.

Children's books have become big business. They are available everywhere, but many are not worth reading. Some hardly seem meant for children at all. Finding the book that touches the child and his or her imagination is the key. *Children's Literature for All God's Children* by Virginia Coffin Thomas and Betty Davis Miller (Westminster/Johannesburg, 1985; \$11.95) can help. It is a wonderful resource that offers specific book and story suggestions for you and to those who are responsible for the children's library at your church.

When choosing a book for a child in your life:

1. Pay attention to the child's interests, joys, and worries. Listen and observe. Ask questions.
2. Read the book before you make a purchase. What does it communicate?
3. Develop an eye for children's art.

and crafted with love. *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak does it. So does *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown. In this simply told and beautifully illustrated book, a persistently loving mother follows her bunny through seven

Where might you,
a faith-sharer, find a
story that tells a
young child something
about God's love?

at makes the ordinary amazing and the impossible seem real. A good storyteller is likely to work with a good artist. A few gifted people, such as Tomie de Paola, Ezra Jack Keats, and Jan Brett, are both storytellers and artists.



Choose a book that appeals to you. With luck you will have many chances to read it together. Who can resist any of the *Frog and Toad* books by Arnold Lobel or the picture books of Peter Spier?

Look for a sense of humor or a surprise, to freshen perspective and sweeten experience. Books by Nancy Carlson and Eric Carle are a treat.

Read for a message—not a sermon or a moral, but a word of hope and truth about good things and good people. Children need “day-lights” as well as night-lights to guide them through complex, demanding, and too-often frightening worlds. Try the *Frances* books by Russell Hoban and the *Little Bear* books by Else H. Minarik.

7. Include books that show how big God’s world is. Books that introduce people, words, images, and adventures from new places make the strange familiar and remind us that God’s children are a remarkable collection. *Moja Means One: A Swahili Counting Book* and *Jambo Means Hello: A Swahili Alphabet Book*, both by Muriel Feelings, and *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott provide a beautiful introduction to Africa.

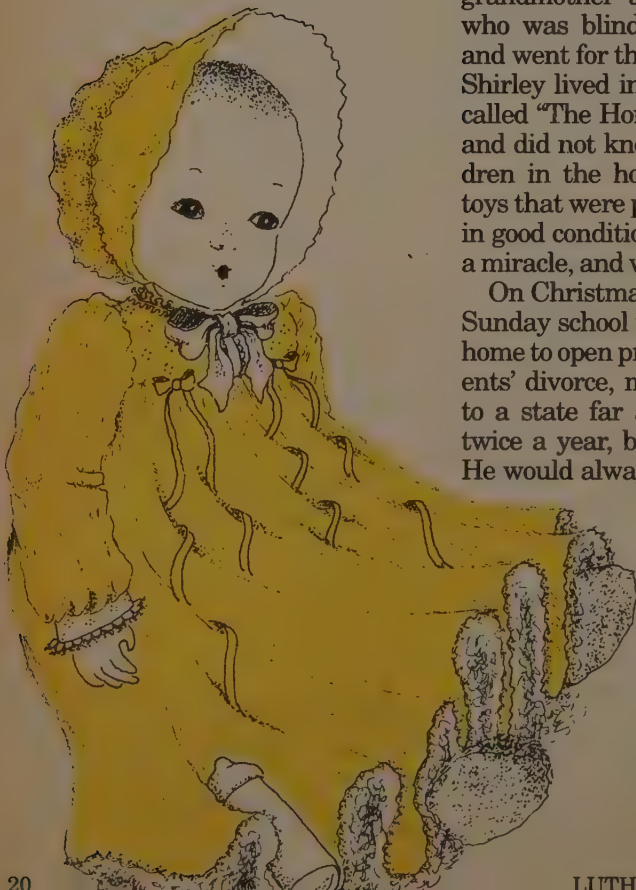
8. Use some of your favorite Bible stories to help you share your faith, and share some of yourself as well. Tell stories of people that connect with the children’s experiences: of Miriam, who sang and danced; of Noah, who counted and cared for the animals; and of Jesus, who was a friend, a healer, a teller of stories. ■

Look for a sense of
humor or a surprise,
to freshen
perspective and
sweeten experience.

Barbara Wilson is a preschool editor in education resources publishing at Augsburg Fortress, Publishers. She lives in Northfield, Minnesota, with her husband and three children.

A Story of Two Dolls

Lois A. Dekker



"This is Lois, who gave me the only doll I ever owned." Those were the words of my childhood friend, Shirley, as she introduced me to one of her friends.

My mind flashed back to December, 1939, when Shirley and I were 10. It was the Christmas season that saw the first dolls who drank from a bottle and wet their diapers. And both of us dreamed of owning such a wonderful "wet-and-dry doll." We confided our wishes to each other, both realizing our dream would probably not come true. For both of us had home situations that were a bit unusual for 1939.

My mother and father had been divorced when I was three, and my mother worked to support me, my grandmother and my grandfather who was blind. Money was scarce and went for things other than dolls. Shirley lived in a home for orphans called "The Home of the Friendless" and did not know her parents. Children in the home usually received toys that were previously owned, but in good condition. Still, we hoped for a miracle, and we asked for the dolls.

On Christmas Eve we went to the Sunday school worship service, then home to open presents. After my parents' divorce, my father had moved to a state far away. He visited me twice a year, but not at Christmas. He would always send birthday and

Christmas gifts. Sometimes he'd ask my mother for gift ideas; other times he and my stepmom would choose things they felt I'd like. This Christmas Eve my dad's large package was still sitting in its mail wrapping un-

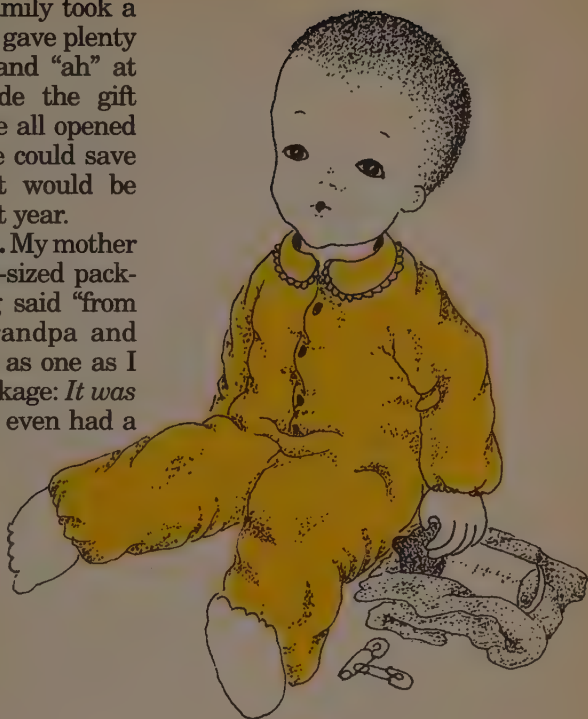
the Christmas tree.

Each person in my family took an opening a gift. This gave plenty opportunity to "oh" and "ah" at each present, and made the gift opening seem longer. We all opened each gift carefully so we could save the wrapping paper. It would be used and used the next year.

Soon it was my turn. My mother placed a small shoe-box-sized package in my lap. The tag said "from mother." Grandma, grandpa and mother watched almost as one as I carefully opened the package: *It was wet-and-dry doll!* She even had a tiny little bottle and diaper. My heart racing with a joy I can still recall. "Thank you, thank you, mother." I said as I hugged both her and the doll.

My heart and mind were so much in the wonderful gift in my arms that I hardly heard my mother say, "Don't forget the package from your mother." She placed the gift in my lap and when the wrappings came off, there was the very special wet-and-dry doll that I'd seen in the local department-store window! Not only was it the large "top-of-the-line" doll, but it had lots of extras: bottle, diapers, booties, slip, dresses, bonnet, and jacket.

My body wanted to jump up and down and shout, "This doll is beautiful." But my head and heart told me how much my mother must have given up, and how hard she must have worked, to buy the doll. My child mind raced: If I was so happy with the large doll, would that make her think I loved her smaller gift less?



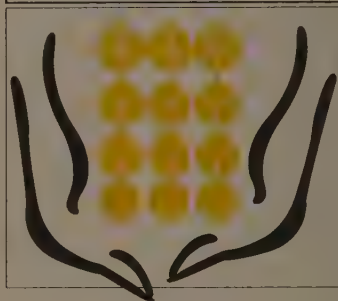
Before I could form a word, my mother said, "Oh, my, two wet-and-dry dolls! You don't really need two. Why don't you wrap up the doll I gave you and take it to Shirley. That way she will have a doll when she opens her gifts at the home." And so I did.

My mother's unselfish love made two little girls' dreams come true—and provided me with a life-long role model. ■

Lois Dekker, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America associate in ministry, is Augsburg Fortress congregational resource representative for parts of Regions 7 and 8. She is a member of Upper Dublin Lutheran Church in Ambler, Pennsylvania. Lois' mother died at Christmastime in 1986.

Session 5 Who Proved to Be a Neighbor

BECOMING
GOD'S
CHILDREN



Study text: Luke 10:25-37

Foster and Jannine McCurley

In Session 4 we studied two parables told by Jesus, the parable of the dishonest steward, and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. We studied how a prudent steward returns to God what belongs to God.

In this lesson, we will study the parable of the good Samaritan. As we study this parable, we will gain a better understanding of what it means to be involved in the stewardship of humanity.

Opening Devotion

As children of your creation, you have entrusted us with the care of this earth. Grant us compassionate hearts, so that we hear the needs of those who suffer. Open our eyes to even the smallest opportunities to serve others and in turn serve you. Help us to understand that you have filled the world with your good news, and guide us as we comfort those who are in need. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Understanding the Word

The story of the good Samaritan is probably one of the best-known stories in the New Testament. It is actually a story within a story that reflects some interesting social situations of ancient Israel.

Luke tells the story of Jesus and an encounter with a lawyer. Within the story, Jesus tells another story about the good Samaritan.

A man approached Jesus. Some called the man a teacher of the law. Others called him a legal expert. Whoever he was, Luke tells us that his goal was to trap Jesus. "How do I receive eternal life? What do I have to do?"

It took Jesus only a moment to turn the question back to his examiner. "What do the Scriptures say?"

The lawyer knew. He had read his Bible. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." But wait a moment. What was happening here? The lawyer had come looking for a good argument, a theological debate, something on which he could snag Jesus and perhaps bring him down to this troublemaker from Galilee. Instead, the lawyer was being tested like a school child.

"You have answered correctly," Jesus told him. "Now go and do what you have just said."

The lawyer was crafty. He was still interested in trapping Jesus. He also was looking for a way to make himself look good. "I do not know who my neighbor is, perhaps he thought, then I can surely evade the issue. So he posed the next question for Jesus. "Who is my neighbor?"

The lawyer wasn't ignorant. He knew full well who his neighbor was. The lawyers knew and so did the theologians of the day. The neighbor was a fellow Israelite. But who exactly was that? The Jew next door? The sick man down the street? The lawyer continued to hope that Jesus would nonetheless be drawn into a debate.

1

Who is your neighbor in your congregation and community?

Jesus responded in a way that the lawyer did not see coming. Instead of answering who his neighbors might be, Jesus told a story, the story of the good Samaritan.

A man was on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, the story goes. The road was long and treacherous, well known for its frequent attacks by robbers. On his journey, the man encountered trouble. He was attacked by robbers and left to die. Passersby, a priest and a Levite (a person who served in the temple and was trained in the law), came and went. Both men ignored the beaten man at the side of the road.

Finally, along came a man from Samaria. He found the wounded traveler and took him to a place nearby where he could be cared for. For the Jewish people of Jesus' day, the presence of this Samaritan in the story would have been almost too much to believe. For years, even centuries, Jews and Samaritans had different and unresolved points of view in relation to historical religious practices and beliefs. A Samaritan helping a Jew? That would surely have shocked Jesus' listeners!

The presence of the Samaritan in Jesus' story precisely illustrates the good news that even a non-Jew can observe the law and receive the gift of eternal life.

Jesus ends the story with a question for the lawyer. Which one acted as the neighbor? Jesus' question took a twist the lawyer didn't expect. Instead of asking who the dying man's neighbors were (and certainly this would include the priest and the Levite), Jesus turned his attention to the one who acted like a neighbor toward the man. The answer, of course, is the good Samaritan, who acted in loving care and showed compassion and mercy. The crafty lawyer could not bring himself to say, "A Samaritan is my neighbor, too." The lawyer was hit head-on with Jesus' own interpretation of the law. That is, Jesus is saying: Do not ask who belongs to God, so that we may act as his or her neighbor, but rather ask how do we act as members of God's chosen people.

2

Who are some modern-day "good Samaritans" in your congregation or community? How do these people act in love and compassion toward their neighbors?

Interpreting the Word **Today's Good Samaritan**

The parable tells us that a Samaritan—who was neither Jewish nor a disciple of Christ—acted as a model of compassion. Certainly, Jesus' story turns the expected upside-down. That is, the

ast is the one who shows mercy and sets the example for the
 ert in Jewish law to "go and do likewise." We who are Chris-
 s can rejoice in the compassionate deed of the Samaritan,
 use he has demonstrated well what it means to be a neighbor.
 his act of human compassion teaches us about what it means
 e involved in the stewardship of humanity that is shared by
 ole of different backgrounds and various beliefs. Being stew-
 of humanity means to act with mercy and compassion
 ard all people as our neighbors—both in our own communi-
 and across the world. Care-giving is not a uniquely Christian
 tern. As children of God, we can work with other denomina-
 s and non-Christian groups to advocate for the needs of our
 highbors. However, those who confess that Jesus Christ is our
 d cannot follow the example of the Jewish legal expert in
 ating who deserves to be our neighbor. We are called to follow
 example of the outcast who gave glory to God by loving an-
 er human being with compassionate care.

3

cribe what it means to you to be involved
 he stewardship of humanity.

neighbors will have various needs. Some neighbors may need
 support in influencing local, state and federal officials so that
 er child-care laws are approved. Other neighbors may be
 rseas, and in need of our support to see that their basic human
 its are guaranteed. Such concern can have significant short-
 long-term benefits for the well-being of our communities and
 world.

Perhaps the following statement about God's creating people
 e free may guide us as we attempt to define some of the basic
 ds of our neighbors.

The booklet *Life in All Its Fullness: The Word of God and
 man Rights* says, "Biblical history is freedom history. To be
 ated in the image of God is to be given the gift of freedom and
 awesome responsibility that goes with that gift. Our true
 ntity and full potential can only be realized in freedom. Au-
 ntic and mutual acceptance in human relations is made pos-
 le in the context of freedom (p. 55)."

m *Life in All Its Fullness: The Word of God and Human Rights*, edited
 Robert Smylie. Copyright © the National Council of Churches of Christ
 he U.S.A. Reprinted by permission.

4

What do you consider some of the basic needs that deserve to be filled in all people? In seeing all people as your neighbors, what are some new ways you can try to help?

Living the Word

Travelers in our Midst

When the Samaritan man traveled the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, he was traveling a highway frequented by thieves and robbers, and known for its dangers. As you think about today's world, perhaps there are places you know of that are dangerous. Perhaps you can think of "highways" or situations that threaten trouble for the people who pass there. Where are those highways, and what are the problems people face? Are there ways we can be neighbors to the people who travel those roads? Talk about some of the different ways people in your town could join forces to help the neighbors in your community. Discuss programs or projects that can actively and compassionately help those who are in need.

■ Our world has changed rapidly in the past year. Talk about some of these changes taking place in our world today. How are they affecting our lives? How might some of these changes affect the lives of other people? Our children and grandchildren?

■ Nuclear war has long been a threat to the future of the earth. In the past months several nations of the world have taken steps to see that this nuclear threat is made less ominous. Talk about how this might be an issue of stewardship.

■ There is a popular phrase that says, "Do not return a favor, but pass it on." Who are the people to whom you could pass on the "favor" of God's love and concern for you? To whom can you be a neighbor?

Looking Ahead

Session 6 focuses on God's will for creation through a look at the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. In the session, we will contrast what the biblical writers had to say about God's intentions for creation with life as we know it today.

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What's It Like Being Old, Grandma?

Evelyn K. Roohk

What's it like being old, Grandma?" My small grandson had been firing questions at me all morning, but this one caught me off guard. I looked down at him. He seemed totally absorbed in playing with a fleet of miniature cars, and, I hoped, not all that interested in an immediate answer. Maybe I'd have a few moments to marshal my thoughts.

What's it like being old? Well, for one thing, it means being more conscious of words describing that state. Recently, I worked a crossword puzzle that actually used *senile* as a synonym for *elderly*. That made my supposedly antiquated blood boil.

Venerable rolls off the tongue nicely. Now there's a synonym more to my liking. Even though it does sound a mite ancient, it suggests dignity and other qualities worthy of respect.

Senior citizen is the modern euphemism. This doesn't appeal to many older folks, but on the brighter side, it seems to inspire welcome discounts at restaurants, motels and theaters. Perhaps as the older segment of the population grows by leaps and bounds, a nationwide contest is in order to pick a new worthy name satisfactory to all.

While there are pros and cons to being old, in many people's minds the cons unfortunately outweigh the pros. When one octogenarian was asked the advantages of age, he could think of only one: "You no longer have to worry about dying young." Not a bad answer, but I'd like to think there are better.

Certainly age means having more aches and pains and having them longer, but it also means we've had more practice in coping with them. Age is being brave, but not being ashamed to confess any fears we may have: not wanting to be rejected, or to be overly protected either; not demanding special attention or privileges just because of age; letting our religious faith sustain us. Yes, we do learn something about life after living all those years.

No one seems to know the exact age at which one becomes old. I agree with the theory that one can be old, or young, at any age—depending on one's circumstances and resources. Down deep maybe we're still the person we were when we were young. I like to think that that young person keeps wanting to resurface now and again—and succeeds in doing just that. Of course, there are drawbacks to this philosophy if we were not very nice people when young!

Some people think old age is a time for sitting back and taking it easy. That's fine, but only if we really want to. Most of us find that after retiring to a less active life, we still have creative urges that must be satisfied to keep us well and happy. Being old, like being young or middle-aged, is planting a tree, writing a book or poem, painting a picture. It's making new friends to replace the old ones lost along the way. It is doing what is necessary to replenish the mind, body and spirit.

Even great writers disagree about aging. Shakespeare gloomily painted old age as "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." Robert Browning was much more optimistic when he exhorted, "Grow old along with me/ The best is yet to be/ the last of life/ for which the first was made." Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Nature abhors the old," but Plato remarked, "Old age has a great sense of peace and freedom. When the passions relax their hold, you have escaped not from one master, but from many."

As I see it, and in present-day vernacular, being old is "keeping your cool," "hanging in there," and "doing your thing." It's definitely not squandering any of the time God allots you.

One of the nicest things about this time of life is having grandchildren, even grandchildren who ask too many thought-provoking questions. Guiltily I looked down at my grandson who had put up an elaborate roadblock for his cars. How much time had elapsed?

"Oh, Michael," I said ruefully. "I'm sorry it's taking me so long to answer your question about being old."

"That's all right, Grandma," Michael looked up, a big smile illuminating his small face. "I guess you can't answer the question because you're not really old."

Bless his heart, I thought. I opened my mouth, "Well, I . . .," then closed it firmly. Why not let well enough alone? ■

Evelyn Roohk is a 74-year-old free-lance writer and grandmother of four from San Juan Capistrano, California.

A Dream Fulfilled

Lorraine Madsen

I have been witness to women's increasing opportunity for participation in the Lutheran church. I remember when whether women could vote during congregational meetings was a question. I've watched women as they now serve on church councils, as pastors, or wherever the Spirit leads.

However, throughout my life I have never seen a woman as a pallbearer at a funeral, and I have attended many funerals.

I would sit in the pew during a funeral and think, "What an honor to be invited to help carry the body of a dear friend or relative." But pallbearers were always men. Women were not physically strong enough for this honorable service.

But my dear friend Olga passed away the other day. I thought and prayed, "Shall I offer to be a pallbearer?" I knew they wouldn't just ask me, a woman. But the Spirit led me, and I suggested to the family that I would be honored to help carry the casket of my dear friend. I think the family was a little shocked.

The next day the phone rang and the family asked me to be a pallbearer. I was deeply touched.

The funeral was today. I took my place with the other five pallbearers—men, sons of my dear friend, Olga. Never before have I been so filled with the Holy Spirit. I felt like my friend Olga was saying to me, "Keep the faith . . . press on . . . you can be a servant in this way too."

I thank my God for this spiritual experience. I thank my friend's family for asking me to be a pallbearer. "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-5).

Blessed be the memory of my dear friend, Olga. ■

Lorraine Madsen, Blair, Nebraska, is a homemaker, mother of three, substitute teacher and supporter of peace and justice causes.

Reflections

Peggy Rynk

Today I sat in the fellowship hall of my mother's church, the church where I grew up. She and I had come here for the second year in a row to attend a mother-daughter luncheon. The hall is a large, high-ceilinged room with a dark linoleum floor and white walls. Today it was filled with sunshine and the conversations and laughter of women amid the clink and clatter of silverware and plates.

When the dishes were cleared away and the program had begun—music first, then a speaker—my mind was caught up in the events of my life that have taken place in or near this room and the milestones it has marked.

As the music washed over me, scenes flooded into my consciousness, scenes of covered-dish dinners and country breakfasts when I was a child, of holiday meals and special programs

at Thanksgiving and Christmas. My parents, my two brothers and I would attend these together. But always, at some point, my brothers and I would wander off to be with our friends from Sunday school class.

I remembered a friend I had made in that class and how she and I would sometimes sit together on those evenings. She was the first person who befriended me when I came new to this church at the age of nine. As I sat and listened to the songs, I wondered how life had unfolded for her.

This room was the site of much socializing in my teen years—those years when we knew everything, and nothing. They were

painful, tentative, exciting times when we were trying to establish our individuality without yet knowing who we were.

My friends and I would gather in this room, or in the hall outside, between Sunday school and church. We'd search our purses and pockets for money and drop our coins in the soft-drink machine. As we sipped our drinks, we'd talk about the latest fashions, teachers, where we planned to go to college and what we might major in. Usually it was psychology or sociology. We were going to solve other people's problems for them—never mind that we hadn't solved our own. We were going to make a difference in the world. As I sat here this morning I wondered how many of us had.

There were Sunday nights here, too, du-

gh school when
come for the eve-
service but still
time to talk
who was dating
, who we wished
ask us out but
, and who might
ting serious.
s is the room
my first wed-
reception took
almost 22 years
swallowed hard
remembered how
usband had
d that night. I
ould see him as
roduced me to
latives, none of
n I had met
e. I thought of the
ness we had
d—the hopes and

dreams and love—and
I wondered what had
happened to it all. I
know now how fragile
life and love can be
and how differently
things can turn out
from the way we have
planned.

We had done our
best in that marriage,
but it simply hadn't
worked. We found, to
our sorrow, that we
weren't right for each
other after all and that
nothing we could do
would make us so.

I thought today, too,
as I listened to the
speaker, about how life
convolutes upon itself
with many twists and
turns. My first hus-
band has been dead
now for nearly three
years. Today I am
married to another
man, and I silently
thank God for bringing
us together. This mar-
riage is working.

My son, now 20, was
baptized in this
church. In this room
he and his father and I
and all the grandpar-
ents had breakfast
together afterward.
This is the church, too,
where four years ago
my niece was bap-
tized—and where, only
a few weeks later, her
memorial service was
held.

My reflections
impress a truth on me:
the church is a vital
force in our lives and
faith. The church not
only knits families and
friends together, it is a
strong thread through-
out our lives. It gives
us reason for joy in
good times and holds
us together in bad.
The church gives us a
sense of place and
belonging and a bed-
rock on which to build
our lives.

I go to a different
church now, but I
remember this one
well. It and the people
who come here are a
part of me, as I hope I
am of them, and this
will always be so. ■

*Peggy Rynk, Charlotte,
North Carolina, is a
full-time free-lance
writer.*



Family Manner

Karen Melang

Marty, my 13-year-old son, is adjusting to contact lenses, which we hope will stabilize his vision. I've appointed myself official nagger, pushing him to insert the lenses several times a day. It's a task he hasn't completely mastered yet and which, along with my nagging, frustrates him. Of course, he did not exactly endear himself to me either by his last-minute request yesterday for a dish to eat at ethnic-food day at school!

Sixteen-year-old Anne finds herself investigating the intricacies of friendships. Sometimes she wonders aloud about how friends should act and what to do when you and your former best friend don't have anything in common anymore and you don't have another best girlfriend yet.

Husband Jim is a treasure of a guy whose education has not prepared him for discovering the origin of the dripping water in the downstairs bathroom ceiling. I don't know either, but I want to find out—soon. Isn't that the kind of question I should be able to answer, I ask, even though I know having male genes does not automatically give you skills for plumbing.

The web of relationships spun by living with three other people is amazingly complex and offers countless opportunities for conflict. For instance, among the four of us there are two morning people and two night people. Some of us hate hot weather and some of us can't stand cold. Some of us are musicians and artists, some are more verbal. We have one fine mathematician in the family, while the rest use our fingers for counting.

It's difficult for us to eat out, because we can't agree on a restaurant. When it comes to food, all we agree on is that none of us likes lima beans. Among the four of us, we've got door-slammers, pouters. And we're all pretty good at snide remarks.



The web of relationships spun by living with just three other people is amazingly complex and offers countless opportunities for conflict.

ouldn't it be wonderful if we could quit nagging
ing impatient? Couldn't we stop saying those
which we only half mean anyway, but which
ever be taken back? If only we could give each
realistic expectations and the benefit of the
If only we could be the kind of persons the
need.

gospel news is that God in Christ has joined
ery own families, has got everything right,
exactly the kind of person we all need. Now
forgiveness covers all the intimate ways in
we hurt and disappoint each other. By God's
our families become places where we do not
to do and make everything right, but where
t to change and grow.

ecost is a time for practicing the "family man-
we have seen in Jesus from Advent to Ascen-
It is a time to practice holding our tongues
o work toward acting kindly. Pentecost is the
ng season when we can, with God's help, be-
develop the discipline of saying the encour-
word, and practicing patience. It is the sea-
rehearse loving, so that it becomes not only
g but a habit.

he when Marty was very little, he talked
a dinner we were planning to attend. "Are
nd dad going to that practice dinner?" he

s," I said, "But people usually call them *re-*
al dinners, because they're after wedding re-
als."

," he said, as the light dawned, "I thought
vere practice dinners where you use pretend
nd practice your manners."

ere's nothing pretend about Pentecost, for
s no need to pretend that we are perfect—or
ing else. Rather, Pentecost is the graceful sea-
hen we get to practice God's manners in our
amilies, even when—especially when—we
deadlines to meet, skills to learn, interrup-
to manage, relationships to sort out, and drip-
water to stop in the downstairs bathroom. ■

*Melang was trained as a deaconess at Val-
so University, Indiana, and is a communica-
the University of Nebraska Cooperative Ex-
n.*



Among the four
of us, we've got
door-slammers
and pouters.
And we're all
pretty good at
snide remarks.



REVIEW

Ladder of Angels: Stories from the Bible Illustrated by Children of the World by Madeleine L'Engle (Harper and Row, 1988; \$12.95).

Ah, But the Children's Visions Speak

Allan Hart Jahsmann

We usually assume that a selection of Bible stories in a book is for children, all the more so when the stories have been written by a world-renowned writer of children's books, and when the dedication of the book says, "for Edward Augustus Hones and all other children near and far."

But contrary to appearances, the prose of *Ladder of Angels* is intended for adults. That's crucial for readers to understand. Here's one entry, for example: *The Vision of Obadiah*—"Edom, Edom, down with it, down with it, you cannot flee the Master of the universe. You think you can exalt yourself as an eagle and put your nest among the stars? The Lord will reach into the stars and pluck you down."

In truth, the thoughts and language of what the book cover calls the author's "evocative meditations" are adult—in their depth of meaning and in the sound of the language.

This contradiction between the book's appearance and its reality threatens its proper use, and that's regrettable. For the poems and freshly crafted Bible stories by Madeleine L'Engle not only retell the Old Testament events, they also confront the adult reader with questions for re-

flection: "Why are we not more careful where we walk?" "Why are we slow to understand?" "What about our hearts?"

More important, readers who are confused about the nature of the book may easily misuse the book with children and fail to draw inspiration from the accompanying visuals.

The fascinating 65 full-color scenes of Old Testament events, envisioned and painted by children, were selected from 12,000 pictures submitted from 26 countries. The paintings were created for a 1989 contest held in observance of the International Year of the Child.

The paintings in the book are really illustrations, in that no reference is made to the pictures in the text. One might wonder, at first, why the text and paintings were combined in one volume.

There is, however, a way in which the adult reader can be enriched much by the children's paintings by the readings. But knowing something first about children's art is helpful.

Most adults judge a child's drawing or painting according to how well it represents the objects in a scene—a person, a house, a tree. But such

sentational view keeps adults from entering the rich imaginative and emotional experiences a child can express in a picture.

When asked to explain her drawing, a little girl said, "This is not a picture. It's a picture to look at." A young child is seldom concerned with drawing or painting things as they are. A child is often concerned with drawing structures and scenes that are meaningful to him or her.

These children's very personal, original responses to the biblical stories in *Ladder of Angels* afford adults an opportunity to get a new "eye" for the events through which the Lord God reveals himself in Scripture.

The pictures in *Ladder of Angels* also serve to introduce children to the biblical events related to the stories. Adults who will use the

pictures for conversations about the stories will find that the children's art will be of greater interest to children than most pictures by adults are.

Only a few of the 65 pictures in the book include angels, so the title of the book may be somewhat misleading. But, never mind, all the children's paintings radiate the spirit of angels, bringing us closer to God through their distinctive visions. ■

Allan Hart Jahsmann, an educator, is the author of many books for children, including Little Visits with God (written with Martin Simon) and Power Beyond Words. He served as general secretary for Sunday schools for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and later as senior editor of children's resources for the Lutheran Church in America.

Contrary to appearances, the prose of *Ladder of Angels* is intended for adults.

LADDER OF ANGELS



*Stories from the Bible
Illustrated by Children of the World*

MADELEINE L'ENGLE

Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia C. Groenewold

♦ Appalachian endowment fund created to provide ministry

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is looking for ways to enhance ministry in Appalachia. This vast region covers 14 states from upstate New York to southern Georgia. An Appalachian Ministry Endowment Fund has been set up through the ELCA Foundation to support ministry addressing issues of literacy, education, economic development and welfare rights. The program asks an individual to make a gift to the fund and to encourage another person to do the same.

Open our hearts, O God, to support those who proclaim the gospel in Appalachia.

Churches join hands to help suburban homeless

Several churches in the northwest suburban area of Chicago have formed a coalition to provide housing for the suburban homeless. The PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) ministry is committed to providing an evening meal, a place to sleep and breakfast to those who need them. This coalition is only one of many such groups throughout the country which realize that homelessness has no specific location. It occurs in the city, in suburbia and in rural areas.

Lord of Love, dispel the stereotypes which can limit our ministry.

Children's needs get attention in LWF's new department

The situation of children worldwide is "worsening at an alarming rate," said Dr. Christa Held of the Lutheran World Federation's new Department of Mission and Development. Many of the department's future projects will focus on the needs of children, she said, adding that the organization is planning projects to deal with our threatened environment as well.

Help us not be overwhelmed by the world's needs, Creator God, help us meet those needs one project one day at a time.

Estonians to build first new church since WWII

The people of Estonia are to build their first new church since World War II. Archbishop Kuno Pajula of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Estonia laid the foundation stone last fall for the church to be built in the village of Saksi. Estonian Lutherans are planning that the first service at Saksi Lutheran Church will be the 1992 Christmas service.

Strengthen and encourage the Estonians in their ministry, O God.

Look for people and issues in the local, national and international news to add to your daily prayer list. ■

Sonia C. Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.

The Ministry of Child Care

Ira Myhr Anderson

It's a typical morning at the early-childhood center in Chicago. The cheery hum of busy children fills the open room. Aleah and Clarence are playing with blocks, as usual. Malaika is listening to music. Others are painting at easels or creating collages. From the midst of this sea of activity, a child emerges and runs excitedly over to me. "Mom," she calls out. Stop-just-short, she looks up with a grin, "I mean, Mrs. Anderson."

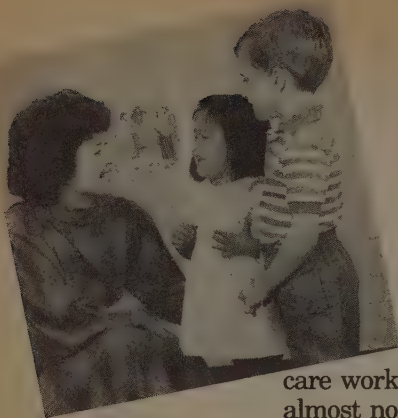
The child's slip is understandable. Like many preschoolers today, she spends much of her waking hours away from her parents. The children at the early childhood center are examples of recent changes in family life and child-rearing in our society.

Although mothers with young children have always worked, in large and growing numbers they are now working outside the home. Twenty years ago only about one-third of women with children under age six worked outside the home. It has been estimated that by the year 2000 this percentage will jump to over two-thirds! Children are now part of a multibillion-dollar enterprise: early-childhood centers, home care, and other forms of child care.

We know that the first years of life are highly formative. Children have basic needs that must be met, and more. Children depend on loving adults to care for them physically, emotionally and spiritually. When parents entrust their children to others, they rightly expect nothing less than excellent care. Children deserve dependable, creative and patient care-givers who can appreciate and nurture them at a crucial time in their lives.



Although mothers with young children have always worked, in large and growing numbers they are now also working outside the home.



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Despite everything we know about the importance of early-childhood education and despite dramatic increases in the need for day care, our society is not adequately meeting these new demands. There are, for instance, no federal standards for appropriate child/staff ratios or hygiene practices. Care-giver positions are often regarded as low-status jobs. Wages for child

care workers are typically very low and benefits almost nonexistent. As a result, the turnover rate for workers in many child-care settings is dangerously high. No wonder parents often feel anxious and guilty about their child-care choice.

But young children and their parents cannot wait for our broader society to value children and their care-givers more. They need our care and attention *today*. But where can they turn for something better? Who in our society can fill this void?

Why not the church? Following the teachings of the model of Martin and Katie Luther, Lutherans consider child-rearing and education as forms of Christian vocation. God wants life on earth to flourish, and God gives life through the cooperation of parents. As parents and other concerned adults, we can be "little Christs" to our neighbor. As a mother of three and a teacher of others, I believe that Lutherans have a valuable tradition to share creatively with our contemporary neighbors—children and working parents. Lutherans can serve these neighbors through child-care ministries in our parishes. We have the spirit. We can find the capital. We know the call to love.

A key resource for such an effort is *Early Childhood Ministry and Your Church: How to Start and Maintain an Early Childhood Center* by Kathleen Lull Seaton and Linda Rothaar (Augsburg Fortress, 1991; code 15-9368; \$13.95). Perhaps establishing and maintaining an early-childhood program is a ministry that is just right for your parish. For starters, this comprehensive guide will help your congregation identify the needs for child care in your community and evaluate the resources available in your congregation.

The book also offers a wide range of possible early childhood programs for you to consider. For example,

parish's early-childhood program need not be a scale day-care center. Or, if you already have an early-childhood program in your church, this book will help you evaluate it and improve it. It will help you develop a creative and relevant ministry.

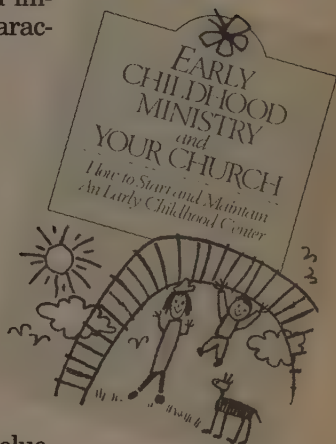
Early Childhood Ministry and Your Church provides helpful hints and a set of standards for creating excellence in child care, offering complete and practical information for starting and maintaining an early-childhood program. The book examines a host of important issues thoroughly, such as age-level characteristics of the children in your care, planning the program, creating the physical environment, establishing financial management, choosing a talented staff, examining legal and licensing issues, working with families and the congregation. The volume also includes an annotated bibliography and a list of other printed resources.

Recent changes in family life and child-rearing may be divisive topics in some congregations. Some members may not believe that children are called to create an opportunity for high-quality care for children. Others may be reluctant to discuss the problem of good day care openly, and the use of the topic can raise feelings of anxiety and tension among parents working outside the home. Tensions may surface between mothers who are employed and mothers who stay at home.

Congregations should not be afraid to talk about these issues. Despite differing views about parents working outside the home, we know that poor day care is not good for children, God's children. And as stewards of God's creation we need to attend to the welfare of children, whatever their situation and needs.

Children do not choose their parents. Nor do children belong to their parents. They are God's gifts to us—to enjoy, to care for and to love. ■

Dra Myhr Anderson, a parent of three children under six years old, has been a head teacher at an early-childhood center and has taught kindergarten. For the past eight years she has written and edited elementary and early-childhood curriculum for Augsburg Fortress.



**Early
Childhood
Ministry and
Your Church
provides
helps and
a set of
standards
for creating
excellence
in child
care.**

A Friendship Helps

Sherry Harbaugh and Connie Leean Seraphine

Two 10-year-old girls, coming from divorced families and uprooted from familiar surroundings, have formed a bond of friendship that has had a profound effect on their respective families. Their story, as told below by significant adults in their lives, reveals how some surprising blessings can take place when people open themselves up to give, and receive, support.

SHERRY:

Nicole was only three-and-a-half when my husband and I separated and just five when the divorce became final. During those transition times, her older sister Amy and older brother David helped her sort out feelings of loneliness and confusion. Marie, a friend of mine, was a great help to all the children. When Nicole was eight, I moved to Chicago to accept a churchwide position with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bringing Amy and Nicole along, but leaving David on his own in Pennsylvania in a new job. This transition seemed even harder than the divorce, since extended family, friends, school,

and congregation were all left behind. The next year Amy prepared to go to college in Boston, we moved to a different flat in a new elementary school district, and Nicole really began to feel lo

CONNIE:

Rebekah was about three when her parents divorced. Her father, John, a Lutheran pastor in Ohio, received much support and comfort from his parishioners during this difficult time. Some nurturing women who baby-sat for Rebekah and her older brother, Jeremiah, became kind of surrogate mothers for the children when their mother moved out of the community.

John and I met at an ELCA educational workshop, and we were married within a year. Soon after, John and the children joined me in Chicago, where I had a churchwide position. Our wedding had been a joyful event, but it soon became clear that leaving the community where the children and John had close friends and extended family was wrenching them.

so happened that, at the same time, Nicole's mother and Rebekah's father and stepmom moved into the same neighborhood. Since Sherry and Connie were colleagues in their parish-wide division, they felt it would be good to have their daughters meet. The first meeting, at an indoor concert of Peter, Paul and Mary, was a shy one. The day after, at the local swimming pool, they established common ground and let go of their shyness. Their parents, relieved that a friendship was forming, took turns over the next few weeks accompanying them to the pool.

But soon there was another transition. Rebekah and Jeremiah decided to spend more time with their mother in Florida and Sherry was ready to leave for Boston. In early mid-August there were two emotional departures from O'Hare Airport as three of the children set out on new journeys.

SHERRY:

I was facing a more extensive travel schedule at work, and Nicole was feeling terribly sad and lonely. Sherry was beginning to feel unsettled, especially about not having options for Nicole's care on weekends. During the week, Liz (a woman living in our building) came upstairs to stay with Nicole when I was gone, but she was not available on weekends. So I was immensely relieved and delighted to discover that Connie and John were willing to have Nicole stay with them when I had to travel on weekends.



Left to Right: Rebekah Seraphine, Nicole Harbaugh

CONNIE:

These days were especially painful for my husband, who had reared the children since his divorce. Not only was he separated from his supportive parish community and extended family; he now faced a house empty of the sounds and lively energy of his children. What helped to fill that void was Nicole's presence on weekends. After several of her visits, we began to call her our "adopted daughter." Together the three of us went to church, to movies and shopping, and we said prayers together at night in Rebekah's bedroom. When I asked Nicole later about this time with us, she said that Rebekah's absence made her sad, but that she really enjoyed being with us. When Rebekah heard all that we were doing with Nicole, she

admitted, "I was mad because I was missing out on so much."

That Christmas, Rebekah and her brother flew back to Chicago to be with John and Connie. The girls immediately renewed their friendship, while Jeremiah enjoyed having two girls to tease.

It wasn't long after the children returned to Florida that Rebekah called her father, asking to come home. As hard as it was leaving her mother and brother, she was missing her father too much. The chance to be with Nicole also likely figured into her decision.

That winter and spring the traffic between the two households increased immeasurably. There was often an extra setting at the dinner table, and the girls took turns staying over at each other's homes. They discovered much in common: a love of cats, a passion for collecting pencils and erasers of every size and shape, and collecting memorabilia from "New Kids On The Block." They choreographed dances, lip-synched music and performed for their families. While their facial features are different, their physique is similar and they wear their straight, long hair the same. Seeing them together, people often assume that they are sisters, even twins, which delights them.

CONNIE:

They talked about themselves as if they were indeed sisters. When Jeremiah moved back to us in June, this language often irritated



Nicole and Sherry Harbaugh, Co

him and he felt they spent too much time together. Even Rebekah admits, "We're too much alike. We can't stay away from each other. Sometimes when they've been playing for several hours, I notice that they aren't speaking to each other and ask them about it. They readily admit, "We fight like sisters too."

The girls go to different schools and have friends in those situations also. More recently, they have enjoyed playing together with other girls, expanding their preteen circle of friends. Girls of this age tend to bond closely with one or two others. But to keep the relationship in balance, both parents have encouraged other friendships also.



Rebekah Seraphine

comfortable as I realize that our sometimes-nontraditional arrangements can be beneficial to all of us.

CONNIE:

This developing friendship has had a big impact on our life as a family and our experience of extended family. I think the friendship our Rebekah has with Nicole has helped soften the edges of Rebekah's transition to a new city, neighborhood and family structure. The girls themselves are learning a great deal about how to maintain a growing relationship as they work through inevitable tensions and other competing friendships. Their lives, however, are not without pain, as is true for us adults. Rebekah admits that she gets sad thinking about her mom when she is with her dad and vice-versa.

SHERRY:

Nicole has been much more relaxed since developing her friendship with Rebekah. She used to worry about my travelling and needed to get more and more anxious when the time got closer for me to leave. Now she seems to move forward to the time she will spend with her "other family." Part of what I've been learning about parenting my children through and after divorce is recognizing that I can't provide all the nurturing. I have had to let go and allow, and even ask, others for help. At first I was afraid to ask, but now I use I thought I would be losing. I've become more

Two nontraditional families linked together for support. Perhaps Nicole and Rebekah will grow up realizing that families can survive—and even thrive—through difficult transition times. When people are willing to expand the boundaries of family ties and interactions, many blessings abound. ■

Connie Leean Seraphine is director of Christian education in the Division for Congregational Life of the ELCA. Sherry Harbaugh is program specialist for family ministries in the Division for Congregational Life. Nicole Harbaugh and Rebekah Seraphine contributed to this article. This is the first in a three-part series of articles on topics relating to divorce and nurture.

MISSION:

Community

Parents of the World's Children

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are." 1 John 3:1a

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." Matthew 18:5-6

These two words of Scripture are directed to all of us, not just to biological, adoptive or "volunteer" parents. For we who profess to belong to the priesthood of all believers are in a real sense the foster parents of the world—responsible to God for the love and care of all God's little ones.

Today there is a pervasive sense of urgency about the concerns for children—concerns expressed by the church, government, social and religious advocacy groups and society in general. The media remind us, sometimes all too poignantly, that many children in the world are homeless, hungry, frightened, abused, abandoned, exploited, trained to fight and kill, sold, brainwashed, even murdered.

Some children, unfortunately, have never known the love of parents and have never been told that they are beloved children of a gracious God. The crises facing our children in the 21st century cannot be delegated to someone else, or be considered to be someone else's problem.

We as Christians are called to tangible ways—individually and collectively—to care for the world's children. And to spread the word when we do so, we are at the same time caring for God. Singer Whitney Houston says it well when she says children are "our future; teach them well and let them lead the way."

As a Christian community, we must all be parents to the children of the world and nurture them as we would our own. We are—to the greatest extent of our ability—to share God's love for them by feeding, clothing, teaching, loving and protecting them, even "the least of them."

*Dolores Yancey
Director for
Community
and
Organizational
Development*



MISSION:

Growth

Gifted in Wisdom and Boldness

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love." John 15:7-9

The good news of the gospel inspires us through the power of the Holy Spirit to be receptive to the call of discipleship that Jesus gives to us daily. As a community of faithful believers, we need not lose heart as we teach and learn from one another that God's forgiveness, love, and hope is for all of God's children.

As faithful disciples, we are invited to continue studying the Word of God so that we might come to embrace God's word in our daily lives. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are guided to reach out. We ask: How is this possible?

As women receptive to God's call to discipleship, the Holy Spirit kindles in us the gifts of wisdom and boldness about the mystery of the Gospel. These gifts empower women to share with one another the theological understandings and insights they have gained as they study the Word of God.

Women of the ELCA is aware of these precious gifts that women bring to their congregational units, conferences and synodical women's organizations. For this reason,

a series of Theological Conferences is being developed for 1991-92 aimed at providing opportunities for women—to strengthen these gifts for further expression in the community through extensive study, open discussion and reflection.

The conferences are for those who lead Bible study, who are looking for personal growth, or who are members of a group/circle exploring questions together. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the conference planned for your area. Watch for the July/August Lutheran Woman Today issue on "Believers as Theologians"—to learn more about the conferences and to grasp the excitement of studying God's word. ■

*Valora Starr
Director for
Growth and
Witness*



MISSION:

Action

In Support of Namibia


It was a highly moving experience to gather with several hundred Namibian men, women and children in Oshakati in northern Namibia this past December 10—Namibia Women's Day. This day marks the 1959 forced relocation of thousands of families from their homes into the Black township of Katutura, and commemorates the deaths of those who resisted. The speeches, skit, songs and chanted story I heard were all in the Ovambo language, but the whispered translations, graphic dance movements, and pulsating rhythms clearly communicated the freedom that Namibians now feel, especially as it contrasts with their former oppression.

I was in Namibia as part of the first study tour to South Africa and Namibia organized by Augsburg College's Center for Global Education (Minneapolis, Minnesota). I stayed in Namibia an additional week to meet with Namibian women and discuss joint ventures with Women of

the ELCA, both present and future.

I am still trying to sort out all I experienced and learned. By traveling with the group, we had opportunity to meet with people and things that no individual could have arranged. Also, the makeup of the tour was crucial. The African-Americans in our group served as key interpreters of the apartheid system which is still in place in South Africa and which, though officially ended in Namibia, still exerts a strong influence there. The diverse backgrounds of group members enriched the experiences planned by the tour leaders.

Before we went to Namibia, it was helpful to visit South Africa, though it was painful to experience. Some changes have been made in South Africa, but apartheid is, unfortunately, alive and well and affects all aspects of everyday life. Happily, we met people, both Black and White, deeply committed to changing the system. We also



*Freedom is in the air in Namibia,
and it was wonderful to feel the energy
that freedom has inspired.*

*Our support and prayers are
still very much needed
and wanted.*

For Whites who, though they recognize some change is inevitable, feel remorse for the evils of apartheid and continue to resist changes. When I wanted to fault the apartheid system I almost always saw parallels with racism in my own country, and any criticism seemed hypocritical.

Since we entered Namibia, however, there was a distinct change within our group and in the people we met. Freedom is in the air there; it was wonderful to feel the energy of freedom has inspired. People in the north, where the fighting took place in the past, are, after 10 years of war, adjusting to being out and attending meetings after dark.

In some ways, however, there seems to be no change. Most Black people still live in what have been Black townships. The businesses seem run by Whites. A young man with a doctorate in law from a London university cannot yet practice law in Namibia, because the country remains under the former regime that recognizes degrees only from South African universities. Economically, some people are worse off than before independence, because then the South African soldiers spent money in northern Namibia. Most of the land is still owned by White farmers.

Yet, there are signs of hope. Laws are being changed so that degrees other than South African are recognized by lawyers. The government is plan-

ning a crucial land conference in June and July, where both the landowners and the landless will meet with experts to seek a workable solution that will bring more equitable land distribution.

What does all this mean for Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? It means that we need to stand in support of our sisters and brothers in Namibia for a long time. A democratic constitution in Namibia has not yet brought economic relief. And people who have lived under colonialism, as the Namibians have done for generations, cannot throw off the yoke easily. They must move ahead in their own way.

To stand in support with Namibia today means to provide economic assistance, friendship and a great deal of patience. Our support and prayers are still very much needed and wanted. And the Namibian women are most grateful for those things Women of the ELCA has already done. ■

*Joan Pope
Director for
Peace with
Justice*



Speak the Truth

Sally Utech Wilke

"Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart." 1 Peter 1:22

At age four, my daughter, Carline, was the youngest participant in a 36-hour planned famine to raise awareness and money for world hunger. She often seemed confused by the discussions, frustrated by the simulations, and bored by the Bible studies. She frequently ran off to another room for "just a teeny bite" of the crackers our pastor had thoughtfully brought for her first experience with fasting.

Had we been wrong to expose her so early to the plight of hungry and homeless people? Could this experience have any positive impact on a four-year-old?

The answer and the words that changed our family life came just a few days later.

"I'm hungry," I announced as I walked to the kitchen for a snack.

Carline followed me. "Mommy," she said, "you're not really hungry. Tell the truth—you just want something to eat."

Had the famine experience affected her? Any lingering doubts were gone. This four-year old knew the difference between *need* and *want*, *hunger* and *desire*. With her help, "I'm dying of thirst" became more honestly, "I'd like a drink."

Since we've learned to say "I want" instead of "I need," it has become increasingly difficult in our family to spend undue money on clothes, furnishings and dinners. It could have stopped there, but it didn't. The money we are saving by walking away from a "want" now goes toward a fund to meet someone else's real need. Praise God that our eyes have been opened! By encouraging a change in words, our daughter helped change our family's response to some real needs in the world.

Gracious God, caretaker of all our needs, keep our words true that we might be able to love one another deeply and meet the needs of all of your children. Amen. ■

Sally Wilke, Winneconne, Wisconsin, is a wife, mother and freelance writer who runs her own business that provides training and consultation on "things that make for peace."

To Mom

Girl

Small, pretty

Running, laughing, joking

Happiness, confidence, youth, delicacy

Changing, growing, blooming

Beautiful, strong

Woman

*Sarah Pierce, 14, of St. Joseph, Missouri,
wrote this poem as a gift for her mother on Mother's Day.*

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the Father has
given us, that we
should be called
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and that is what
we are.

*1 John 3:1
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